



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, WA 98101-3140

OFFICE OF
ECOSYSTEMS, TRIBAL AND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

October 25, 2010

Betsy Kaiser
Walla Walla Ranger District
1415 West Rose
Walla Walla, Washington 99362

Re: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) comments for the Umatilla National Forest (Forest) Cobbler II Timber Sale and Fuels Reduction Project (Project) Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). (EPA Project Number: 09-073-AFS)

Dear Ms. Kaiser:

This review was conducted in accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. Under our policies and procedures, we evaluate the environmental impact of the proposed action and the adequacy of the impact statement.

In our June 14, 2010 comment letter we assigned the Draft EIS (DEIS) a Lack of Objections (LO) rating and noted our appreciation and support for many of the design elements common to all action alternatives and mitigation measures developed for this Project. We continue to especially support your careful consideration of project activities in Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas and plans to increase the amount of Old Forest.

Our DEIS comment letter also stated our recommendation that the FEIS discuss the likely frequency and intensity of future activities which would be required to maintain project achievements. Additional information on page I-133 of the FEIS was responsive to our recommendation. We look forward to your continued, science based, improvements in the effectiveness of silvicultural prescriptions. Over time – and in general - we are hopeful that the need for repeated understory thinning, mastication, grapple piling, and prescribed fire is reduced through the gradual restoration of natural forest processes.

Thank you for your responsiveness and this opportunity to comment. If you have any questions please contact Erik Peterson of my staff at (206) 553-6382 or by email at peterson.erik@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Christine B. Reichgott", is written over the typed name.

Christine B. Reichgott, Manager
Environmental Review and Sediment Management Unit